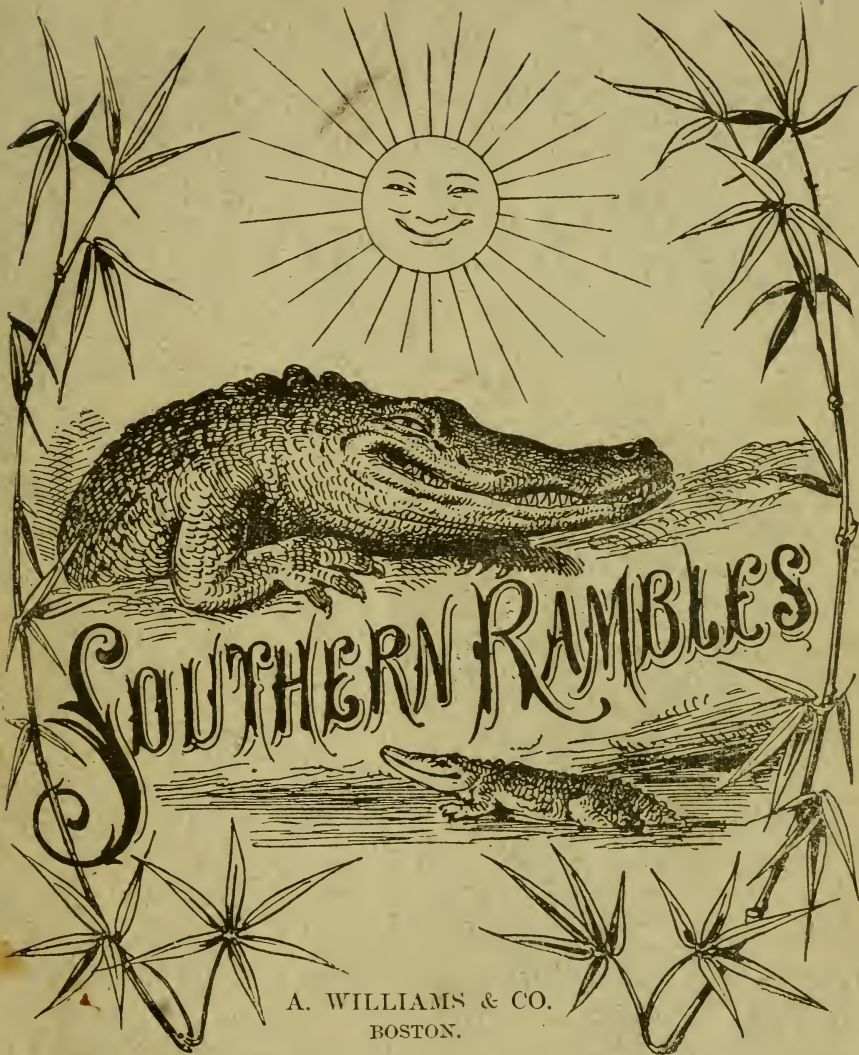


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1881



SOUTHERN RAMBLES



A. WILLIAMS & CO.
BOSTON.

1881





THE STRANGER'S STORY. (See page 115.)

SOUTHERN RAMBLES.

FLORIDA.

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BY

OWEN NOX. [*pseud.*]

[*Cory, Charles Barney*]
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PREFACE.

EVERY book should have a preface; not that it adds in any way to the value of the work, but it gives it an air of respectability.

O. N.

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SOUTHERN RAMBLES.

CHAPTER I.

THE START.

IN the winter of 1877 I contracted a severe cold, and as I had always desired to go South, persuaded myself that I was

going into consumption and that my health required me to go to Florida.

I consulted a number of doctors, and they all agreed that it would un-

doubtedly benefit me to leave Boston for a while, but none of them seemed to think a trip to

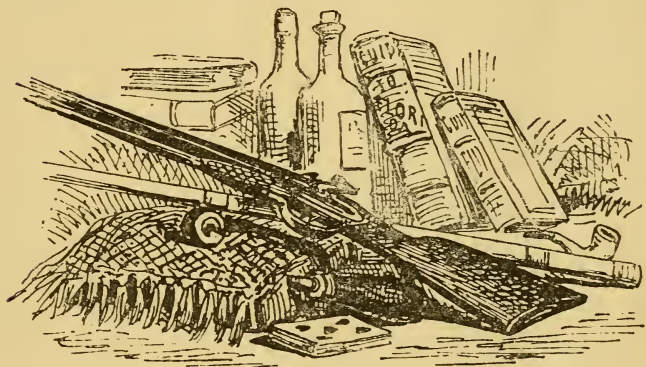


Florida necessary; some of them even spoke lightly about my cold, and after thumping me on the chest for a few minutes and listening for the echo, told me that my lungs were as strong as a horse's.

Of course they were quacks, and did not know their business; so I put no trust in what they said, but kept on visiting doctor after doctor until I struck one at last who seemed to understand my case. After going through the usual exercises, he asked what was the matter with me. I told him I thought it would be dangerous for me to stay in a cold climate all winter, and had an idea that a trip to Florida would benefit my health. He said he thought it would be the best thing I could do. I told him I thought I should like to go soon, and asked him if it would not be advisable to get away at once. He replied emphatically that it would, and closed our interview in these words: "My dear sir, although there are no symptoms of actual consumption, yet, as you already have a cold, and as 'an ounce of prevention,' etc., etc., there can be no

question but what a change of climate could not be otherwise than beneficial. Five dollars, please! Thanks. Good morning!"

On my way home I met Jack —. Upon learning of my intended Southern trip, he ex-



pressed a desire to accompany me. We dined together, and before we parted it was definitely arranged to leave the city on the following Thursday.

The next few days were spent in buying a long list of things which Jack said we should need. We purchased all the books we could find which had anything to say about Florida; and the more

we read, the more anxious we became to visit the wonderful scenes which the authors described. All of them agreed in one thing, if they differed in everything else: the climate was like one eternal spring. Fruit of all kinds grew everywhere, and was so plenty that the inhabitants were glad to have visitors walk about and pick it off the trees. It was a paradise for hunters; game of all kinds abounded, and the fishing was magnificent. I admired those books before I visited Florida; I admired them more afterwards. One of them was a gorgeously gotten-up affair, in paper covers, which reeked with illustrations of tropical scenery. Some of the author's descriptions fired us with especial admiration.

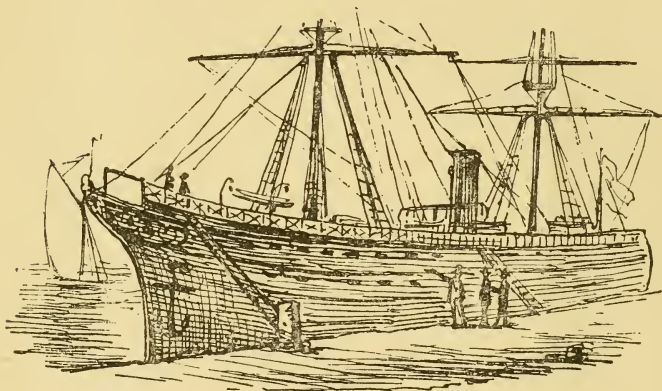
Jack always carried one of those books with him, and whenever we visited one of the places described, he pulled it out of his pocket and read some of it. I got so at last that I dreaded to visit a place that I remembered to have read about. I could tell when it was coming. Jack would grow restless, and say, "Let me read you something concerning this place, — it is interest-

ing"; and then he would drag out some infernal maniac's diary and commence. He never commented on what he read, but would hunt soberly for the page, and then commence and read it from beginning to end without a stop, — without a smile, — always the same drawling intonation and maudlin expression, until the last word was read; then his face cleared, and a load seemed to be lifted from his mind. He said he liked to get information about the places which he visited.

It has been claimed that the English language is inadequate to convey to the mind a correct idea of an especially beautiful scene. I perceived this to be a fact; for the ideas which we had formed of places after reading those descriptions differed somewhat from our opinions concerning them upon our return home.

The day soon arrived when we were to start, and nothing unusual transpired in consequence of the grand event. The city was quiet when we left. This was caused, I suppose, by our departure being somewhat sudden, and its not having got noised abroad that we intended to

leave. Jack was in the best of spirits at the thought of visiting a Southern climate and enjoying some of the splendid shooting he had heard so much about. Our cargo of implements and ammunition was safely housed in the bag-



gage car; and as the train slowly moved out of the depot into the darkness of the night, we felt that our trip had fairly commenced. We were still in a civilized country, so we slept well, and upon awakening in the morning found ourselves in New York. After breakfasting at the "Union" we procured a team and drove down

to the steamer to take a look at the state-room which was to be our quarters until the steamer arrived in Savannah. There appeared to be a delightful uncertainty as to the time of her arrival at her destination. The ticket agent had said three days at the longest. I have always admired that man. I found out afterwards that he had been employed by that line for years, and knew the running time of the boats by heart; and he knew that the old tub on which he smilingly saw us take passage had never been known to go anywhere in three days in the memory of man. Last year, while they were taking up a subscription in aid of the yellow-fever sufferers, I heard that this man was detained in a locality where the disease was raging. I then withheld my subscription; but he came back safe, — they always do, — and during my last visit to New York I met him. He was as smiling as ever, and actually had the audacity to ask me if I was not going South again soon. I did not tell him that the only thing that would induce me to think of it would be his funeral celebration. But

I wander from the subject. The captain thought to make the passage in three days, if we had good weather. He had hoped to do that same thing for years, and if he only lives long enough he may do it yet; but not on that boat.

We were to have sailed at three o'clock in the afternoon; but it was midnight before we cast off and steamed slowly down the harbor. It was a beautiful night, but too cold to remain on deck, so I sought the cabin in the hopes of getting a look at my fellow-passengers. A number of ladies and gentlemen were on board, and the cabin presented quite a lively appearance.

Picking out a philanthropic-looking old gentleman, I found a seat near him, and after having glanced casually at the other passengers for a moment or two to give him a chance to open the conversation, remarked, —

“Fine weather.”

He dropped his chin, and looked at me over his spectacles.

“Yes. Going to Savannah?”

I intimated that I was, unless the steamer



stopped suddenly on the way, which I hoped would not be the case.

“Fine place, Savannah; lived there off and on for the last twelve years. Been there before?”

“No.”

“Family on board?”

"No."

"Live in New York?"

"No."

"Boston man, perhaps?"

Before I could answer him, some good instinct prompted the steward to ask if a valise and shawl which were lying on the table belonged to him; and while he was describing the person who had left them there, I managed to slip away unobserved.

In the smoking-room I found Jack, who hailed me with, "Well, old boy, we are off at last"; and after delivering this piece of valuable information, settled himself in his chair, looking the picture of contentment. A slight rocking motion was perceptible, as by this time we were getting pretty well out to sea. Several young fellows on the other side of the room apparently felt it too; for two of them grew slightly pale, and throwing away their cigars, remarked that it was "about time to turn in," an attempt at sea slang which, coming from their whitening lips, sounded almost ghastly.

An hour later, when we descended to the cabin, we found it deserted save a sleepy steward, who only roused himself long enough to inquire if we wanted anything. We made our way to our state-room, and by careful balancing managed to undress. Watching my chance, I jumped skilfully into the berth, taking all the skin off my knees on a board which had been placed at the side of the bed, ostensibly to prevent the occupant from rolling out, but in reality to cause untold anguish and suffering to the unwary passenger. I lay there gritting my teeth, for I would not have had Jack know it for the world; but my feelings were somewhat soothed a few minutes later by seeing him, while trying to remove his under-garments, loosen his hold on a hook to which he had been clinging, and a roll of the vessel caused him to sit down suddenly, taking the stool with him. The upper berth had fallen to his lot, and while climbing into it another lurch assisted him with a suddenness which was probably unexpected; for a dull sound from above, followed by unintelligible

mutterings, convinced me that he was either saying his prayers, or had tried to butt down



“CAUSED HIM TO SIT DOWN.”

the side of the state-room, and was thinking it over.

Life on board a steamer is necessarily monotonous, and during the passage nothing occurred worthy of mention. Everything went along as smoothly as possible except the vessel, whose progress was anything but smooth. I believe the company expects three fourths of the passengers to average one meal a day, and are greatly vexed if the weather happens to be so fine as to allow those passengers who are unused to the sea to take their meals regularly. To pass away the time the usual games were indulged in, and the usual *ennui* was felt by everybody except Jack. He had insisted on taking an extra "sea chair" along with him, and I now perceived his reasons for so doing. Almost as soon as we were fairly under way he commenced operations. Jack's *modus operandi* were as follows: He generally kept his chair and the extra one chained together, so that they could not be used by any one without his permission. After breakfast he promenaded the deck,

watching the other passengers as they straggled out one by one, their pale faces showing how much they were enjoying the passage. After eying them with a critical glance, he would pick out the prettiest young girl he could see, and



then walk deliberately up to her and offer her his chair. Of course this opened a chance for conversation, and generally ended by the chair being accepted, and the acquaintance of the young lady formed. If she happened to be accompanied by her mamma, he would offer her

his own chair, and watch his chance to get hold of mine. His "brilliant conversational powers," as the girls have it, usually charmed the mammas, and after that the way was clear. He seemed to enjoy himself greatly, and became a perfect lion among the ladies. It was pleasing to me, too, to observe the peaceful expression of contentment which overspread his features after he had told some more than usually outrageous lie and saw that he was believed.

CHAPTER II.

SAVANNAH.

ONE morning when I went on deck, I found that we had crossed the bar and were slowly steaming up the beautiful Savannah River ; for it is a beautiful river. Its clear water resembles coffee as much as anything else; perhaps it would be better to say that it resembles a weak solution of very poor coffee. On either side, the river was bounded by a thick growth of reeds, and the only redeeming feature were the numerous flock of birds, which ever and anon rose and fluttered about for a moment, filling the air with their fresh and varied melody. (Patent applied for.)

As we neared the city we passed numbers of small boats containing negroes, evidently in pursuit of the ducks and other water birds which were constantly flying about. All the passen-

gers were assembled on the forward deck, enjoying the view and their first experience of a Southern climate. It was a beautiful warm day even for Savannah, and the whole company was in high spirits.

After we had landed and got comfortably settled, in a really good hotel, Jack and I started out for a walk. Our first impression of the city was not as favorable as I could have wished. Everybody we met appeared to have a resigned look of contentment. The city was as quiet as one of our New England towns on Sunday. After walking for some time, and not seeing anything worth seeing, we perceived a female figure coming up the street on the opposite side. Jack crossed over and sauntered along with his hands in pockets until she had passed. Then he recrossed the street to where I was standing, and as he came up I perceived a look of disgust on his features which was not there when he had left me.

I ventured to inquire if she was pretty. Apparently he thought this was adding insult

to injury, for he looked me straight in the eyes for a moment, and then fired out his words as



“ AN EPISODE.”

though a steel spring was concealed in his throat:—

“Pretty! forty years old, and cross-eyed. Thunder and lightning! talk to me about your Southern beauties.”

“I am sorry that your first experience has been so unsatisfactory; but still it was an episode—”

“‘Episode’! Nonsense! Hyena ’is what you are trying to think of; but I forgot you didn’t see it as close as I did.”

He was evidently disturbed, and it was not until we had returned to the hotel and had become interested in a game of billiards that his face cleared, and he resumed his usual expression of imbecility.

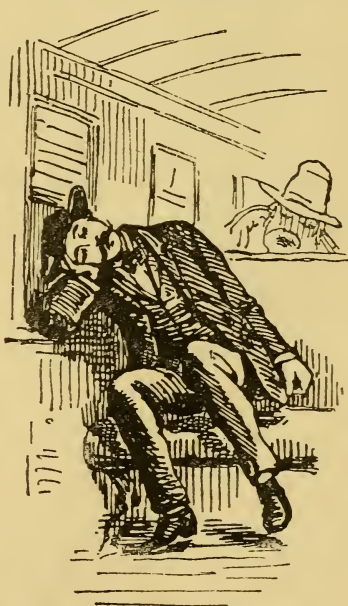
One day in Savannah was all that we could stand, and it was hard work to do even that. It was pleasant enough to feel yourself once more on dry ground; but we had experienced that novelty before, and wanted something besides earth to amuse us. There is plenty to amuse a stranger in Savannah, if he goes around

quietly and does not try to do everything in a hurry. A person may find amusement anywhere, if he only looks for it; and people differ in their tastes. It is a fine place for consumptives. If they do not recover in a few months, their mind has become calm; they do not dread death.

After dinner we held a consultation, and decided to start for Jacksonville that afternoon. Accordingly, we procured our tickets, and shortly after were arranging ourselves as comfortably as possible for the all-night ride before us. We had engaged seats in the only drawing-room car connected with the train, and it looked as though we were going to have a pleasant trip of it. Almost immediately after the train started, the car in which we were seated bounced around so that it was impossible to read without injury to the eyes; so after one or two attempts we gave it up, and fishing out a pack of cards from one of the bags, we repaired to the rear of the car, and bribed the conductor to bring us a substitute for a table in the shape of a piece of board,

which we rested on our knees. The motion caused the cards to slip around and mix themselves up in the most aggravating manner, so that a very few minutes convinced us that the work was greater than the amusement.

Jack was sleepy, and arranged himself comfortably for a doze, while I commenced reading again; but I soon gave that up for the greater amusement of watching Jack's actions. He had leaned his head on his hand, with his elbow resting on the sill of the window, and was no doubt quite comfortable for a few minutes; but soon the motion of the car caused the sharp edge of the sill to cut into his arm, and he changed his position, but did not im-



prove it. The sill was wide, and so to rest his head against the glass caused his neck to assume a position at right angles with his body. In a few moments this position evidently became irksome, for he again changed it. This time he muttered something to himself, and sitting bolt upright rested his head upon the back of the seat. The jarring of the car soon caused the screw-heads on the top to bore themselves into the base of his skull in a manner not conducive to comfort. After this he gave it up in disgust, but cheered up somewhat when the conductor passed through the cars and announced that we stopped for supper at the next station.

When the train stopped we left the car and walked across a platform to the hotel, where we were greeted by a woman who was standing on the porch with a vigorous salute from a bell which she held in her hand, and which had evidently been used as a cow-bell previous to the establishment of the "hotel." Entering a large room we seated ourselves, together with a number of our fellow-passengers, around a small

table, and a voluptuous female of uncertain age demanded if we would have coffee or tea. We took coffee; and right here let me warn all future generations against ordering coffee on that road. Coffee is good in its way; but the flavor of last year's beans does not improve it. I was glad I tried it, for otherwise I might have visited that place in future years, when I might have been in poor health, and I shudder to think of the consequences.

They gave us eggs and some slabs of meat. There was some yellow stuff in a dish, which I observed several of the passengers putting on their bread. I could not imagine what it was, and asked the v. f. of u. a. to name it. She cast on me a glance expressive of pity and contempt, and explained that it was "butter."

Jack tried it once (once is not often), and after looking at it for some time in silence and thought, remarked that some instinct told him that the person who prepared it was a woman of advanced years. I did not ask him to explain, and he maintained a mysterious silence on the sub-

ject afterwards. The cravings of hunger being satisfied, we repaired to the platform and walked



"NAME IT."

about until the conductor came to us and told us that the train was about to start. He then hunted up the engineer, and as that worthy entered the engine coop we climbed into the car and made our way to our seats.

Soon after, being somewhat sleepy, we ordered the porter to make up our berths, and undressing ourselves we retired. I fondly believed that my troubles for that night were finished, but I was mistaken. Lying upon my side, I tried to sleep, but as my head resting on the pillow did not move much, and as my body resting on the hard bed *did* move a great deal, the position soon became irksome. The human neck is a gigantic failure as a substitute for a hinge.

During some of the sudden jumps which the car took, I flew up and caressed the upper berth, and by the natural laws of gravity my return to the bed was more forcible than pleasant. Still I came to enjoy a Southern country, and I was enjoying it to my heart's content. A minister in the berth opposite me was evidently enjoying it too. I knew he was a minister, for he was

saying his prayers. He usually finished every sentence with the name of his Creator. During one of the sudden jumps he got as far as "Oh," as he soared upward, and the word "God" was jerked out of him as he returned to his berth in a most awful and blasphemous manner.

I must have dropped asleep soon after this, for I dreamed that I was rolling down the side of a mountain, and kept rolling, rolling, until I became insensible. I was awakened at daylight from an uneasy sleep by the jolting of the car, and dressing myself, repaired to the back platform. There I found Jack and the minister. Jack was smoking a cigar in a gloomy manner, and seemed displeased at something; and upon my asking him if he had passed a good night, he merely snorted, and kept on puffing away in silence.

It was early morning, and the dew had not yet dried on the leaves. The woods on either side of us glistened and sparkled as if covered with precious gems. We were passing through a vast forest of pines, and from the branches of

the giant trees hung great quantities of Spanish moss, giving the woods a very picturesque appearance. Every few minutes we passed along the borders of small ponds, frightening ducks and herons from their hiding-places with the rush and roar of the train* as we whirled by them. The morning air was fresh and cool, and we enjoyed the view until we entered Jacksonville at a little after nine o'clock, strange to say only one hour and a half behind time.

* The above sentence is good. Any one who has travelled on Southern railroads will appreciate it. "Rush and roar of the train" is exceptionally fine.

CHAPTER III.

JACKSONVILLE.

JACKSONVILLE, city of eternal summer, how we had longed to see it; how we had longed to bask in its shady groves, and breathe its pure air! Visions of sparkling springs gurgling through the fresh, sweet-scented verdure, overhung by swaying palmettos, had haunted our thoughts ever since we had left the North. In our dreams we had fancied ourselves reclining beneath the shade of some sweet-scented orange-tree, eating the ripe fruit which hung about us gleaming like gold in the splendor of a Southern twilight, while birds of many kinds and bright plumage flitted around us, filling the air with their fresh and varied melody. I say we had dreamed all this, and I do not regret it. It is sweet to dream.

Entering a stage-coach, we were driven to the

St. James Hotel, and after half an hour's hard work, with the aid of quantities of soap and water, we nearly regained our natural color, and donning some clean clothes descended to the dining-room, and had a really good breakfast.

Jack became quite cheerful, and kept up a running fire of conversation with an elderly party who sat opposite.

Just as we were about to leave the dining-room the door opened, and in swept a young girl, who was, as Jack afterwards remarked, "a tearing beauty, and knocked him all in a heap." She sat down at our table, and then commenced operations to arrange her clothes in a position to suit her. First she sat down and gave her dress a pat on one side, — to be sure it was still there, I suppose, — but almost immediately rose again and settled herself in a different manner. This time she seemed to have hit it, for she smiled sweetly to herself, and after fidgeting around for a moment or two became quiet at last, and stared squarely at me across the table. Being a modest man, I dropped my eyes. She

then transferred her attentions to Jack, who had



A MODEST MAN.

been looking at her fixedly ever since she

entered the room, his eyes having something of the expression of an animated corpse. After having viewed him to her satisfaction, she turned her attention to the waiter and languidly ordered him to bring an orange, and she would think what she would eat in the mean while. As I was not at all anxious to see her devour an orange, and as I was anxious to smoke a cigar, I left the table and the room. Jack followed me slowly, and when we had reached the office said solemnly, "In my younger days I used to amuse myself by staring our old cat into fits. I could frighten a baby into convulsions in less than a minute ; but I will bet my chance of wings hereafter that if that girl fixed her eyes on an Egyptian mummy, the mummy would have to cave in."

We strolled past the garden in front of the hotel and continued on until we reached Bay Street, which presented quite an attractive appearance. It is broad and smooth, and is lined on both sides by large, handsome stores. A number of these stores are devoted to curiosities, which meet a ready sale to tourists who

desire to carry home some little present to a friend, or as a memento of the place, and generally prefer curiosities to anything else. Alligators' teeth, stuffed birds, snakes, feather fans, sea beans, — anything, in fact, in the shape of a local curiosity is always in demand. The dealers charge exorbitant prices for these articles, and get them, too.

Jack stopped in front of a large, imposing-looking store, the windows of which were filled with curiosities of every description, and wanted to go in. So in we went, and Jack with his usual bashfulness stalked up to a gentleman behind the counter and remarked that we did not wish to buy anything, and that we only came in to look around. The proprietor was very affable, and told us to make ourselves at home. There were quantities of curious specimens of natural history and art, and I should have enjoyed myself hugely rummaging about had it not been for Jack, who amused himself by tickling the monkeys, stirring up the snakes, or picking up the little alligators and examining

them gravely when some nervous elderly lady happened to be near him.



Jack bought an alligator, and so did I. Mine lived for some time; but Jack's met with a most untimely end. He was in the habit of taking the little fellow out of his pocket by mistake, when feeling for his gloves or handkerchief (when ladies were about); but one day he forgot to "take it out by mistake," when he

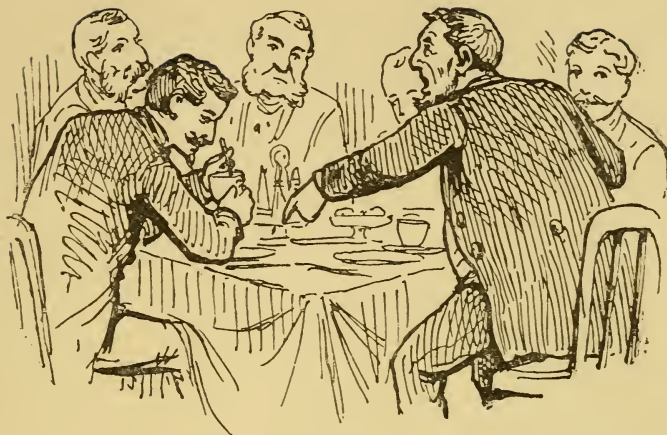
happened to be lying out on the grass, and the poor little chap was crushed to death. Jack mourned for him long. He said he missed the friendly squirm which it gave whenever he put his hand in his pocket.

When we returned to the hotel, most of the people were at supper; and as we took our seats at the table, I observed a short, sharp-featured man sitting opposite me, who had evidently just arrived.

At the time of our entrance, a gentleman at the head of the table was talking to a friend of his, who was seated next the new arrival, about the Winsor Hotel in Montreal, and stated that some Americans who were there wrote their names on the walls. At this the new arrival fired up, and remarked,—

“See here, stranger! do you mean to tell me that Americans marked up the walls more than you blarsted Englishmen?”

The gentleman remarked that there were people of every nation who sometimes did thoughtless actions without meaning to do any harm.



“But you said Americans.”

“They certainly were Americans.”

“Well, that yanks the bun; that does take the cake. See here, young feller! I’m an American. My name’s Brown, — John F. Brown; soap-fat man; north side Chicago. Everybody knows me there, — me and Mr. Blank. You must have heard of him. He’s a flower, he is. He owns fighting dogs and fighting cats and cocks, and has fast horses and a nice little girl. That’s the kind of a man he is, and I’m his friend; and that’s the kind of a hairpin I am. You swell

Canada chaps think you can come down here and blow about your hotels; but it won't go down with me. Why, I've been all over your country, and never saw a ranche worth marking on yet."

The gentleman left the table, and Brown became quiet; but in a few minutes he fired up again, and looking at Jack, remarked, —

"When I hear a man talk that way, — me, it makes me mad enough to eat a couple of eggs."

We saw that he was hunting for a new victim; so as we had finished our supper, we rose and left the table in dignified silence.

After half an hour's stroll, we returned to the hotel, and passed the evening playing billiards, so we saw no more of Brown that night; but early the next morning we observed him talking loudly to the clerk. As we passed, he was saying, —

"I should like to know what kind of a hospital you call this, anyhow. That galoot in the next room was swapping coughs with the girl

over opposite, and between 'em they raised the — ”

We passed on, and the rest of the speech was lost. I missed him at dinner, and on asking the clerk where he was, was informed that he had left for St. Augustine on the morning boat to wake up the people there; “and,” said the clerk, “he can do it.”

CHAPTER IV.

LIFE in Jacksonville is easy and pleasant. Occasionally, during the winter, the mercury drops to 30° during the early hours of the morning, and then the visitors don innumerable under-flannels, and howl about the lovely Southern climate to keep up appearances. Every warm day that comes along, they hang their thermometers up in the most sunny place they can find, and sit down to write to their friends in the North.

Happening to enter the reading-room one morning, I observed an unfinished letter lying upon the table, which had evidently been discarded on account of an immense blot which obscured the picture of the hotel which embellished the corner of the paper. It ran as follows: —

“JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA, Jan. 7, 1878.

“DEAREST NELLIE :

“I am sure you ought to feel highly flattered at receiving another letter from me so soon ; but I have been having such a perfectly splendid time lately that I wanted to tell you all about it. It is *very warm* to-day. I am sitting by the open window as I write, enjoying the breeze, scented with the fragrance of the orange groves. Don't it seem funny that I should be sitting here writing to you, with the thermometer at 80°, while you are — ”

It broke off abruptly here. She was undoubtedly a new arrival. An old hand would have gone down to the reading-room, nestled up to the stove, and written, “It is too warm to write, and really this languid climate seems,” etc., etc. They all do it in one way or another when writing to friends at home who have not enjoyed the luxury of a Southern climate. Some of them crowd the temperature up a little; but then, what is the use of being mean about a few degrees?

Jack wrote a letter home about a week after our arrival, and I happened to enter the room just as he commenced operations. He had evidently been taking some violent exercise, for the

perspiration stood out on his brow in beads. The window was raised about a quarter of an inch (to ease his conscience, I suppose), a heavy shawl was thrown over his shoulders, and he was writing as if for a wager. To crown the whole, he had hung his thermometer up on the wall, with the bulb about half an inch from the table, and every few minutes he would take the cigar from between his lips and rest it on the table *under the bulb*. Whenever he did this, the registered temperature was something frightful.



WRITING HOME.

I asked no questions, and he made no remarks; but he wore a satisfied smile as he mailed the result of his labors when we went down-stairs to dinner; and I could not help thinking that if the orthodox belief is true, and all a man's lies are recorded in heaven, the angel who has the contract for Jack must soon become a drivelling idiot, or take a partner.

CHAPTER V.

A WINTER may be passed very pleasantly in Jacksonville. One makes pleasant acquaintances; visits numberless places, many of them worth seeing and many of them not worth going across the street to see; possibly the latter predominate.

Jack and I enjoyed ourselves: the tranquil, easy life suited us, especially Jack. The more lazy the life, the better he was suited. We passed our time riding, boating, and sleeping. After dinner we sometimes adjourned to the parlor and sung awhile. We sung duets occasionally, but not often, as it drew a crowd. I was once highly complimented on my singing. It happened in this wise: In the middle of a song a gentleman called who wanted to borrow some money of me. He listened attentively

until I had finished, and then sighed, "I could listen to you forever." I lent him the money. As a rule, people listened to my singing in enraptured silence and then went away. Sometimes the proprietor would hurry in and ask me to stop singing, as there was a sick child on that floor. After a while I noticed that he generally asked me to desist, and advanced the sick-child theory, whenever there happened to be some new arrivals looking about the hotel to see if they liked it well enough to stay; and I came to the conclusion that he wished to impress them favorably by showing his tender-heartedness and solicitude for sick children. I did not like him as well after that. I do not like to see a man assume a virtue to increase his business.

We made many friends among the guests of the hotel, and were constantly making new acquaintances. One morning as I entered the dining-room I observed a gentleman and lady, whom I had not seen before, sitting at our table. He occupied the seat next to me, and we very naturally conversed together while eating our

breakfast. After leaving the table, I lit a cigar and strolled up and down the piazza, where in a



"LOOK AT THAT CHILD."

few moments he joined me, and we were chatting pleasantly together when I observed a nurse, leading two children, who was evidently just starting out for a walk.

I said, "For heaven's sake, look at that bow-legged child! Why, his legs are like barrel hoops. Whose is it, — do you know?"

"He is mine."

"Oh! I mean the other one."

"They are both mine."

I said something idiotic and tried to change the subject; but the conversation flagged, and in a few moments he excused himself and left me. Whenever we met afterwards he treated me with studied courtesy, but there was a coldness in his manner which I could not account for.

In and about the city there are a great many pleasant drives, and good horses and carriages may be hired at reasonable prices if you make a bargain beforehand. Jack and I strolled over to a stable one afternoon and inquired the price of a carriage for the afternoon. The man named a price, but Jack interrupted him and said we

did not wish to buy the team, we merely wished



DON'T OWN A GLUE FACTORY.

to hire it for a drive. It was lost on the native,

—sarcasm has no more effect upon them than prayer. We did not engage a team then; but the next day I sent a boy over to the stable to get us a good horse and buggy. In about half an hour he returned, seated in a buggy drawn by an emaciated wreck of a horse, whose sides looked as though they had been passed through a fluting iron.

Jack said, "Did you tell him we wanted a *good* horse?"

"Yes, sah, he said this was just the horse to suit you."

"Well, you go back and tell him that he has made a mistake in the parties; we are not the proprietors of a glue factory."

"Sah?"

"Shut up!"

Jack was evidently annoyed, so to save trouble I climbed into the team, where he followed me and took the reins. We woke up the wreck, and after dusting him with the but of the whip for a few moments, induced him to jog along at a reasonable rate. Poor fellow, he was so thin

that his backbone rattled at every step; but we



enjoyed the ride and the exercise.

Among the places in Jacksonville well worth a visit are the tobacco factories, where a large number of negroes are employed in manufacturing cigars. Their singing is well worth hearing. We hired a number of them to come and sing to us in the evening, while we sat upon the porch of the hotel. I shall never forget the evening. It was a bright moonlight night, and we had been listening to their rich voices blended together in the simple harmony of the negro melodies. For five minutes every one had maintained a perfect silence. No one wished to speak. All nature seemed at rest, and the peaceful stillness seemed



HOME, SWEET HOME.

harshly broken by the sound of the human voice. Suddenly one of the negro tenors commenced singing "Home, sweet home," while the others hummed an accompaniment. When it ceased and died away, more than one young girl slyly wiped away a tear which they should not have been ashamed of; our hearts yearned for our loved ones at home, whom we were not to see, perhaps, for months to come.

CHAPTER VI.

EVERY day we heard people talking about the wonderful shooting which they had had in such and such places. Their stories were so large that *before* I visited the wonderful spots, I thought they were stretching the truth a little. Afterwards, my impression remained unchanged; but I was told that the year I was there, game was scarcer than any in the remembrance of the oldest inhabitant. This may have been so; at least, as I had no way of disproving their statements, I gave them the benefit of the ponderous doubt.

Standing on the wharf one day, I saw a poor, broken-down old man, whose white hair and tottering steps gave evidence of extreme old age. As he passed me, I observed that he was fearfully cross-eyed. His otherwise fine features wore an expression of peaceful resignation, as

of one who had lived a good and true life, and was ready to die, when his time came, with perfect trust in his Creator.



An old pilot, with whom I had been conversing a few moments before, touched me on the shoulder, and said, —

“Do you see that white-haired old party?”

“I do.”

“Kinder cross-eyed.”

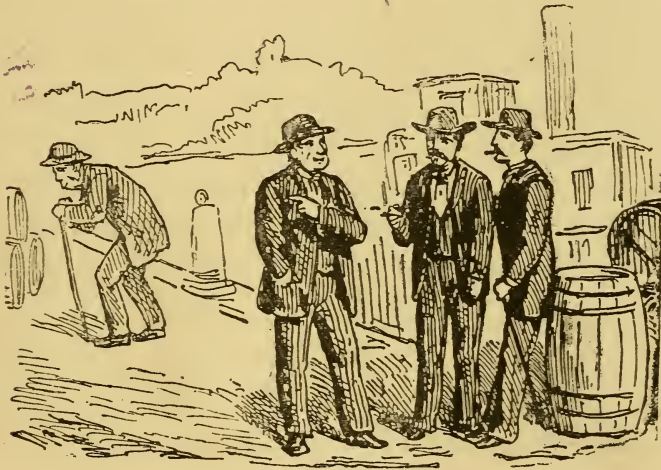
“I noticed that he was.”

“Know who he is?”

“No.”

“Well, ten years ago he was one of the smartest pilots in the place; but he had one bad habit, and that was lying. We all tried to break him of it; but it was no use. Why, he used to commence light in the morning, and we did n't mind it much, — sorter white lies, you know; but

as the day wore on, he grew worse and worse, until towards night, if he happened to meet you alone, he would thunder out double-jointed lies eight or nine feet long without a break. But to get back to my story. One morning Sam, or



KNOW WHO HE IS?

'Salt,' as we used to call him, happened to be standing on the wharf, smoking his pipe before breakfast, and waiting for the steamer to get in. As the passengers landed, a young fellow fresh from New York stepped up to him, and asked him some questions about the place. 'Salt' took

his measure, and opened light on him at first, to see what he was made of; but as the young chap seemed to swallow everything, he warmed up to his work, and in a few minutes forgot himself, and exploded an awful, compound evening lie on an empty stomach. He got about half through with it, when he was taken with cramps, and tied himself into two or three kinds of knots. He suffered awfully for nearly three weeks, and although the doctors pulled him through, they could n't get his eyes straight. His overstrained system has never entirely recovered, and now he is a broken-down old man at forty."

This man bore a good reputation. The next day I happened to pass the house where he lived, just as he came out of the gate; he raised his hat politely, and made a remark about the weather. At that moment a man passed by on the other side of the street, who looked like a candidate for a morgue. The ghastly white skin was drawn tightly over the high cheek-bones, and his deeply sunken eyes had a feverish light in them which was very unpleasant to look at. He was

very thin, and walked painfully, like one weary and longing for rest. As he passed, he coughed a low, hollow cough, with a wheeze on the end of it that sounded so tomb-like it made me shudder.

The pilot looked sadly after him as he passed, and muttered, "Poor fellow! poor fellow!"

"Do you know him?" I asked.

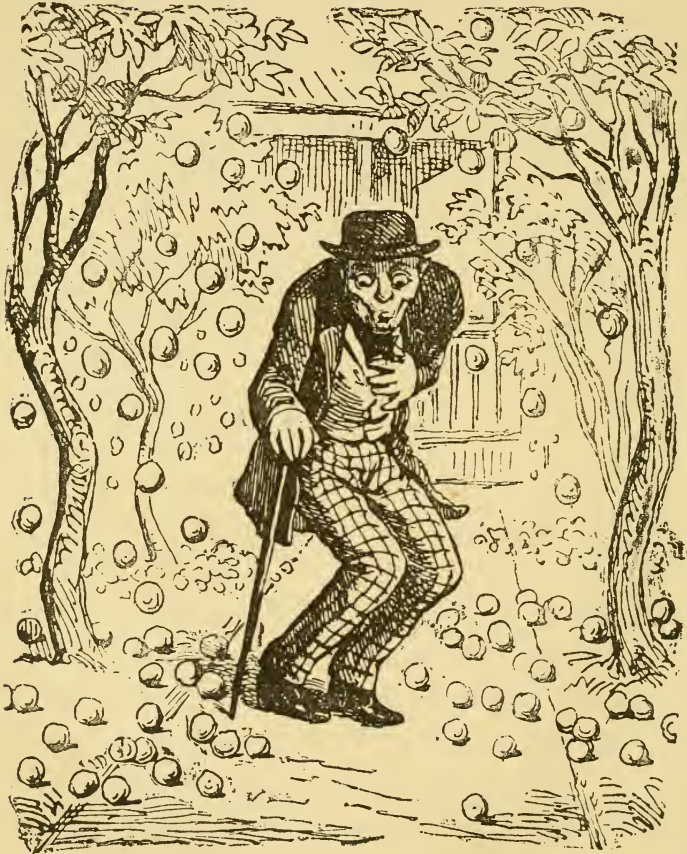
"Know him? I guess I do, poor fellow; it's awful to see what ambition will lead a man to!"

"How?"

"Why, when he landed here three years ago, he was one of the healthiest consumptives that I ever saw. He had an awful cough, and he used to shake the house so where he boarded that the other people would n't stand it, so he used to go out in the garden and take his morning practice; but although it was an improvement on the house business, it raised the deuce with the fruit on the trees. Some one up river heard of him, and offered him a large salary if he would come up and cough in his orange grove during gathering season.

"He did it, and the experiment was an immense

success. He could clear a tree in three coughs,



and sometimes two if it was a still day. He got contracts everywhere, and was proud as a peacock

of his coughing. But one day some mean fellow put up a job on him, by tying a lot of oranges on a tree, and then hiring him to cough them off. He went and exploded a cough that shook the tree to the roots, but not an orange fell.

An expression of surprise passed over his face as he fired another and another without success. Then he got mad, and taking off his coat and vest, opened on that tree in earnest. The way he raged and coughed and wheezed was something awful to witness.



“He killed the tree, but not an orange dropped. He kept it up till he swooned. As he got warmed up to his work, some of his coughs knocked him off his feet as if a gun had kicked him. He lost all ambition after that, and spent all his money in drink. Now he lives along by selling his body to the doctors. Whenever he gets hard up he goes and sells himself to some new doctor, to be delivered at death; but if he keeps on getting thinner and thinner the way he has been doing lately, there won't be enough of him left to go around, poor fellow.”



He turned his face aside to conceal a tear which slowly trickled down his weather-beaten cheek.

I said, “Are you sure that is all true?”

“True! As I hope to be saved in the hereafter, it is all true as gospel. I saw it myself.”

CHAPTER VII.

PILOT TOWN.

PILOT TOWN is situated at the mouth of the St. John's River, and may be reached in an hour from Jacksonville in any of the little steamers which ply up and down the river. We had gone there for shooting; and so, when we had stowed ourselves away in a comfortable little house, we unpacked our arsenal and spent the afternoon in preparing for the next day's slaughter.

From the stories which I had heard concerning this place, I had some idea of not taking a gun at all, but intended to cut a stick and walk about clubbing the game to death. I gave up this idea and took the gun along, as Jack said he was going to take his, and I wanted to do an equal share in the carnage which was to take place the next day. The evening was warm, and

we sat out on the piazza smoking our cigars, in the quiet enjoyment of their narcotic influence and the mosquitoes. We listened for the croaks of thousands of night birds, but didn't hear any. It was probably not late enough. After a while Jack got sleepy, and proposed going to bed. Previous to retiring we looked over our ammunition once more. I filled several bags with cartridges, which weighed collectively about as much as a mule could carry with any comfort. Jack did the same; and added all he could stuff in his pockets besides. He said he always believed in taking enough ammunition in a game country. All being arranged, we retired. I listened to Jack for a few moments as he moved around in the next room, and then I heard him climb into bed; immediately there was a rattling sound, followed by some remarks.

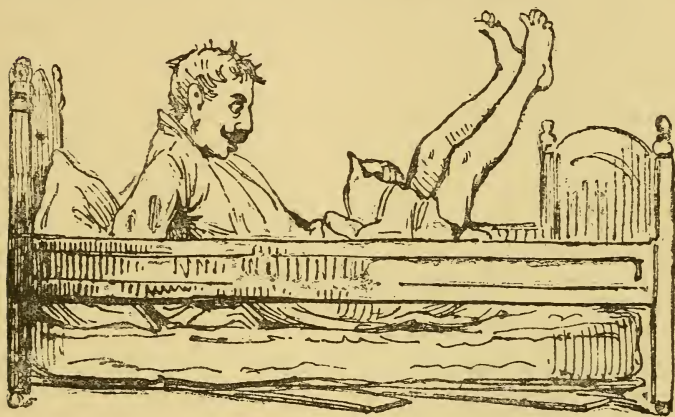
I was interested, and asked, —

“What's the matter?”

“Oh, nothing, only the slats of my bed have all fallen out.”

I heard him get up and arrange them carefully,

then all became quiet. He had climbed into his bed so carefully that I had not heard him. I wanted to ask if he had fixed things all right, but heard him murmuring softly to himself, and did not wish to interrupt his devotions.



Night after night this performance was repeated, and as regularly he said his prayers. Sometimes during the night Jack became restless, and a sudden movement in his sleep caused a general discharge of slats; then commenced a groping for matches, during which operation he generally knocked over half the breakable objects in the room, or tied his toes up

in a knot on the corner of some box; all the time he would be rehearsing blank verse in a foreign language.

I am glad we did not stay there long; for if we had I think Jack would have soon acquired a vocabulary which would have made a pirate turn pale with envy.

The next morning we were * "up with the lark"; and after an early breakfast we loaded ourselves with ammunition and guns, and started up the road in the direction of the woods. After walking for an hour, I had seen and murdered two little birds. I had heard Jack shoot once, and judged he was having as exciting sport as myself. By this time the



* I have seen this remark somewhere in print.

cartridges weighed a ton, and I sat down on a smooth stone in a shady spot to wait for game. I did not wish to rest, but thought that perhaps the noise of tramping through the bushes might frighten away the game. In about an hour I heard something coming through the bushes, and perceived Jack approaching, carrying a little white heron under his arm, which I afterwards learned he had found in the bushes, unable to fly, and captured it alive.

Observing me, he made a short cut to where I was seated, and lowering his head to pass beneath a low limb, he put his face within an inch of an immense spider, which was evidently waiting to embrace him.

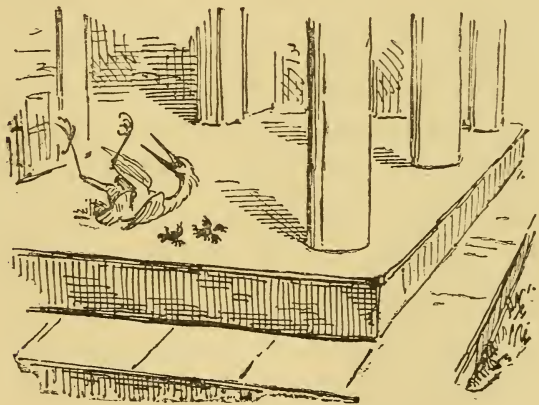
For a second he remained stationary, and then fired the heron into the sky with one hand, while he dug a grave with his gun with the other. He then made the longest jump on record. Upon questioning him afterwards, he said that he was not at all nervous, but had simply dropped his things and stepped back to find something to catch the spider with.



STEPPED BACK.

After digging up Jack's gun we started for the house, and upon reaching it found that dinner would be ready in a few moments; so piling our game upon the porch, together with the guns and ammunition, we wended our way to our respective rooms to enjoy the luxury of a bath.

Some weeks afterwards a Northern gentleman asked Jack about the shooting at Pilot Town, and he said, "Shooting? Oh, yes; it is much better there than about Jacksonville." I noticed also he inquired the gentleman's address, but showed no desire to visit that city on our return North.



CHAPTER VIII.

UP THE ST. JOHN'S.

A FEW days after the events related in the preceding chapter, we were comfortably settled on board of a fine little steamer, bound up the St. John's River, touching now and then at some of the larger orange groves which line its banks, but making no stop until we arrived at Palatka.

Palatka boasts of a good hotel, the Larkin House. It is one of the best in Florida, and is improved by contrast with the others one finds farther up the river. Jack and I took our guns and wandered into the woods for a little sport, and had our usual success, although Jack swore that he saw a bird. The next morning we again boarded the steamer and continued on our way up the river. From this point the scenery becomes very pretty, and the river is so narrow that it is nearly always perfectly calm. A short time

after starting we passed the mouth of the famous



Oclawaha River (famous for its alligators twenty feet long, its beautiful scenery, and many

other lies which I have forgotten). Here the pilot told me about a "'gator" which he had shot at its mouth; but he had been up all night, and was tired so that he did not do himself justice. After passing Lake George the river narrowed still more, and I killed my first alligator; later they became quite common, and Jack and I killed several, the largest of which measured about twelve feet in length. At Georgetown we were told that deer were very plenty, but somehow or other we did not want any deer, and so kept on our way up the river.

It was night when we arrived at Enterprise, having travelled about two hundred and eleven miles up the St. John's. We stopped at the Brock House, and liked it so well we did not change. Jack summed up the whole matter a few weeks afterwards, when asked by a gentleman (who was going to Enterprise) where he would advise him to stop.

"Well, the Brock House has its defects, and many things about it might be improved; but if I were you, I think I should stop there."

“What other hotels are there in the place?”

“None!”

As I said before, we stopped there, and so did a number of other people who enjoyed the air, the butter, and the high prices as much as we did; perhaps more. The days were spent in hunting, and we found the shooting very good about Enterprise. Quail, snipe, deer, and alligators are abundant within a short distance of the hotel, and one may get very good sport by taking the trouble to look for it. Our evenings were generally passed in the reading-room in the society of a number of gentlemen, who were there for the same purpose that we were. The evening after our arrival, as we entered the room, it presented a lively appearance, calculated to cheer one after a hard day's tramp. There were but four gentlemen in the room; one was asleep on the sofa, two snoozed in their chairs, and the fourth was doubled up in the corner smoking his pipe. We joined in the general hilarity, and after sitting there for a few minutes, our voices unconsciously sunk to a half-whisper as if in a church.

The gentleman who was lying on the sofa, and



who appeared restless and uneasy, suddenly rose

to a sitting posture and relieved himself of the following speech:—

“Gentlemen: This sort of thing is played. Night after night we assemble here to pass the evening together, and what do we do? We plank ourselves in some chair and toast our shins, and amuse ourselves by swapping lies and gambling with the spittoon. Now, I move we have a game of poker.” The motion being duly seconded, it was put to a vote, and carried by a large majority.

During the evening Jack kept losing small amounts, until at last he had a hand which suited him; he kept on betting until his opponent called him. He showed an ace full; his opponent showed four fours. Jack looked the hand all over carefully, and then smiled a sickly sort of smile,—the kind of smile one would expect to see on the face of a doctor, who, while dissecting a corpse, had it rise up and shake its fist at him. He then said it was late, and he “guessed he would go to bed.”

Neither of us understood the game very well,

so after one or two evenings at it we gave it up. We did not dislike the game; in fact we found it amusing, very, but *expensive*.



EVENING AMUSEMENT.

The next day we received an invitation to witness a cock fight which was to take place a short distance from the hotel. Neither of us had ever seen a real fight, and were anxious to witness an affair of that kind; so at the appointed time we started for the ground, in company with several other gentlemen who had also received invitations. Arriving at the appointed spot, we strolled around and watched the operation of "heeling" the birds. The natural spurs of the bird are sawed off, leaving a



stump on which to fasten the artificial weapon; around this is placed a strip of soft leather, over which the "steel" is pressed on and tightly bound to the leg of the fowl.

The first pair which was brought out were magnificent birds of the "Spangle" breed. Upon perceiving each other their eyes flashed, and they seemed to quiver all over with rage. Before being released they were allowed to peck at one another for a few minutes, to still more excite their passions. The moment they were placed

upon the ground they rushed at each other with blind fury, striking so quickly it was impossible to follow the blows. Almost immediately one of the birds dropped to the ground limp and lifeless, with the steel spur of his adversary buried in his brain. The fight lasted only eleven seconds. The victor was carried away and carefully looked after, while the unfortunate rooster was thrown to one side to make room for the next pair, which was then being brought up.

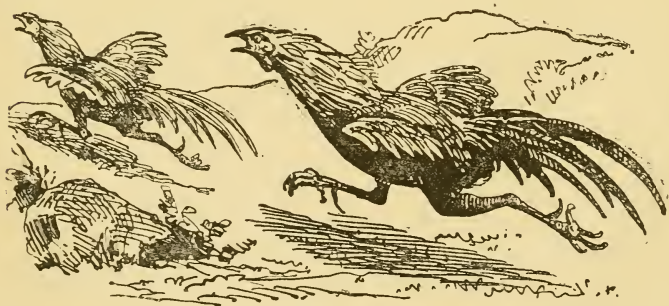
These were even handsomer than the first pair. One was a large red of beautiful proportions; his opponent was much darker in color, and somewhat smaller.

At the first rush the black was knocked completely off his feet and fell over on his back, but was up again almost instantly, striking savagely. Again and again the black was knocked over, but always managed to regain his feet before the red could strike him. After one of these falls we noticed that the red walked about in a dazed sort of way. His breath came with a gurgling sound, and the blood began to drip

from the end of his bill. An unlucky stroke had cut his throat, and it was now only a matter of time as to which would win the fight; his own death was certain. The red seemed to know this, for recovering himself he rushed savagely at his opponent, and for a moment they fought as fiercely as at the commencement. They both fell together, and upon separating the black did not get up. However, a moment afterwards he struggled to his feet, and we perceived that his leg was broken at the knee. It was painful to witness the efforts of the brave little fellow to stand and fight. At every rush he was knocked down and cut badly; still he tried again and again, and one of his strokes penetrated deep into his opponent's breast. Again they closed, and this time the game little black did not get up again. He was dying, and when they lifted him up he was dead. The red stood with drooping head, his life-blood slowly dripping from his wounds; gradually his eyes closed and he sunk slowly down, down, until he rested upon his side. Once he tried to raise his head, but was

apparently too weak; and with a gasp almost human in its agony, his muscles relaxed, and he lay at full length upon the ground, a conqueror, yet conquered.

There was to be one more fight before dinner, and the gentleman who had invited us said that he was about to try a bird which he knew nothing about. It had been sent to him by a friend, and he intended to match him against one of his best cocks. In a few minutes the birds were brought up and allowed to peck at each other as



A TERRIFIC RUSH.

usual, to excite them. Somehow the new bird did not seem as ambitious as the others had been to be released, but when placed on the ground

he struck at his opponent savagely. As luck would have it, his adversary's spur just pricked his neck a little. The moment he felt the touch, his whole appearance changed. His next rush was terrific, but we were unable to learn the result of the fight, as at the time of our last view of them as they vanished over the top of a small hill, the pursuing bird had not gained sufficiently to admit of commencing operations.

CHAPTER IX.

DEER HUNTING.

WE had been told that there were quantities of deer in the vicinity of Enterprise, and Jack wanted to kill some; so did I. The result was that we hired a negro who owned a family of dogs to take us where we could destroy one. He was a tall, powerful chap, all bone and muscle, and for a wonder we found him willing to work; what was still more strange, he did not promise to show us herds of deer grazing in close proximity to dense thickets. He said he would take us where he had seen deer, and where he knew deer sometimes went; but whether we would see one or not, he could not say. This saint's name was "Bunk." We were going to an island which was situated about a mile down the lake. Some of the dogs did not want to get into the boat, but "Bunk" petted them with a

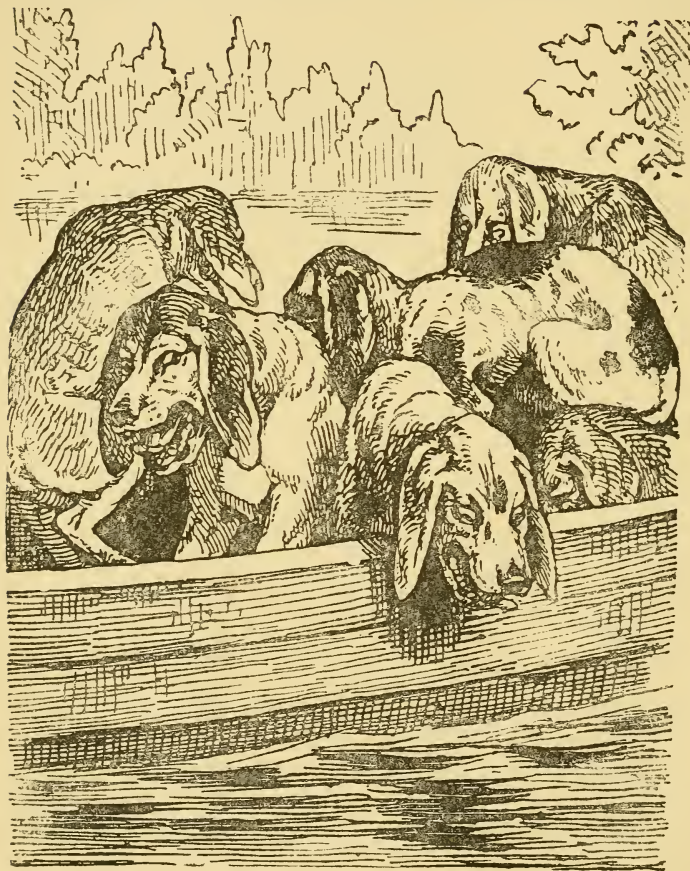
club, and coaxed them aboard. On the way



BUNK.

down some of the dogs became seasick, and were

unhappy and miserable until we reached the



island. Upon landing we made the boat fast,

and then our guide led the way through the wood, followed by his drove of dogs. He said he would place us in certain spots which he knew of where the deer usually ran, and then he intended to scour the woods with his brood of curs, making as much noise as possible to drive the deer in our direction.

He started, and we followed him for about a mile, in silence ; then Jack inquired if the "place was far." He said we were " 'most there " ; then followed fifteen minutes of hard walking over rough ground, through tangled vines and bushes, until at last we arrived



at the edge of the woods, and saw before us a long stretch of level prairie, dotted here and



there with clumps of small trees. Under one of these he posted Jack, and Jack was very glad to be posted. Then followed another tramp of about half a mile to another desirable spot; at last we reached it, and I concealed myself in a thick growth of bushes to wait for the coming deer.

In about half an hour I began to get restless; the ants had found me, and had been exploring me with disgusting familiarity. A large black spider had been hanging over me for

ten minutes. I watched him closely, but something called my attention away for a moment, and when I looked up for him again he was gone. Of course I naturally concluded he was climbing about over me for exercise. This did not annoy me at all, but I was tired of staying in one place and wanted exercise myself, so I took it.

Upon reaching the place where I had left Jack, I found that he had also grown tired of staying in one place, and was about starting out to hunt me up. While we were conversing upon the advisability of going in search of "Bunk," that worthy appeared, followed by his faithful hounds, with the exception of a few odd ones which had become tired and gone to sleep somewhere on the way. He had seen no deer. We were both anxious to continue the hunt, but it was growing late, and we thought it better to wait until the next day, so we went back to the boat. Jack found a huge hornets' nest attached to a branch, which he cut off, nest and all, to carry home as a trophy. Somehow Jack always had a liking for hornets' nests: when he was a boy he was one

day presented with a gun by a kind relation. Of



course he must try it, and the first thing he saw

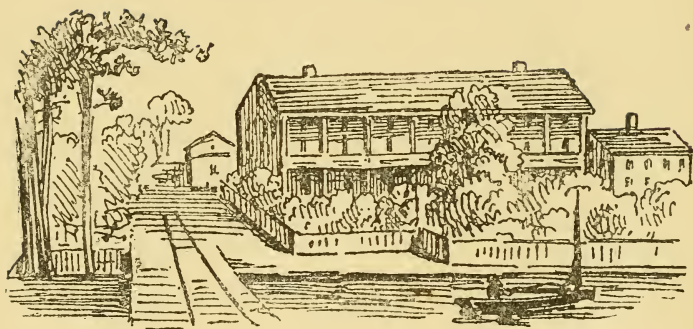
when he wandered into the woods was a huge hornets' nest suspended from a branch about seven feet from the ground; he took good aim and fired, hitting the nest, and also tickling one of his father's horses which was feeding at the time



just under it. The hornets came out to inquire into the cause of the disturbance, and found the horse there just as he was preparing to start for the next State; they encouraged him in his idea. Time not taken. Jack took his meals standing for a week after; telling the joke to his father, they had roared over it together.

CHAPTER X.

LIFE AT ENTERPRISE.



THE row home was very enjoyable: I steered. Jack was lazy and curled himself up in the bow of the boat for a nap, leaving "Bunk" and I to do all the work. The sun had gone down, and the soft, indistinct, foggy appearance of objects at a short distance proclaimed that night was at hand. The full moon had risen, and illumined the shore with a splendor seldom if ever seen in the North; it was fully light enough to read by,—

if one had anything to read, and the type was



not too small. As we moved slowly along

within a short distance of the shore, the only sound that broke the perfect stillness was the regular movement of the oars in the row-locks, and the dripping of the water from the blades. I was impressed by the grand beauty of the scene, and began to muse on the wonders of the universe and such things. The perfect silence appeared to affect Jack too, for he suddenly lifted up his voice and sung, keeping time with the movement of the oars. The rich bass voice floated out over the lake, like the subdued braying of a dying jackass. As he commenced the second verse, a venerable dog climbed up on the seat in front of him and improvised an accompaniment. When he got to the chorus all the dogs joined in; it was grand, but Jack did not appear to think so, for he stopped singing,—so did the dogs.

We arrived at the hotel without further incident, and after supper were well laughed at for returning empty-handed. We had forgotten to prepare a lie, and so had no excuses to offer, but were only too glad to go to bed as soon as we

had finished our cigars. Here let me say that in Florida "to bed" and "to sleep" are not synonymous terms; "mattresses" and "stock farms" may be, but I am not quite positive upon that point, as my recollection fails me.

At such a place as Enterprise, one has a chance of seeing many curious characters; this category includes a class of men who are termed "crackers," a name originally applied to the poorer class of white people inhabiting the southern part of Florida. One evening, while we were sitting on the piazza of the hotel, a tall, lean, lanky individual, with a dilapidated suit of clothes and a more dilapidated hat, came slowly up the steps and stood looking about him in a dejected sort of manner. He nodded to Jack, who happened to be nearest to him, and remarked, —

"Fine weather."

"Yes," said Jack, "you ought to make the crops pay this year."

"Don't raise any."

"Not a farmer, perhaps?"

"Wall, I used to be, but I can't work now. I'm sick all the time."

"What's the matter with you?"

"Wall, I've got the shakes and the dyspepsy, and I can't get nothen to do me no good."

"Why don't you go to a doctor?"

"I've tried lots of um; but they don't none of um seem to do me no good."

Jack glanced over his shoulder to see if he was observed, and then leaning forward, said in an impressive manner, —

"Do you see that tall, gray-haired old gentleman over there?" (pointing to a group of new arrivals, none of whom he had ever seen before in his life.)

"Which?"

"The chap with the spectacles."

"Yes."

"Well, that is one of the most celebrated physicians in America: he could cure you up in a jiffy if you could get him to give you some medicine; but he is a gruff old duffer and don't want to be bothered about his business while on

a vacation, so says he is not a doctor. You will



have to tease him a little, and if he is gruff don't mind him: it's his way."

The "cracker" absorbed all Jack had to say, and after letting it settle, turned around and stared fixedly at the elderly gentleman, who was seated in company with his two daughters at the end of the piazza, all unconscious of what was going on.

Jack seized the occasion to wink at me. After looking steadily for a moment, the "cracker" asked in a dreamy sort of way, —

"Do you think he would help me, if I asked him?"

"Don't know; you might try."

Another pause; Jack's face as calm as a tombstone.

Then, "I guess I'll try him, anyhow"; and with that he moved slowly off, in the direction of the doctor.

Jack said he thought a change of climate would suit his constitution, so he went into the reading-room. I did not like being alone, so I went with him. In the reading-room we found a number of gentlemen, and Jack explained the joke to them in a whisper. The blinds were

closed, but the windows were open, and we could hear all that was going on outside without being seen ourselves. We crowded around the window in silence, waiting for the fun to commence.



Presently a voice, which we recognized to be that of our new acquaintance, said,—

“ Say, mister, be you a doctor? ”

“ I am. ”

Jack’s face was a study, but he recovered him-

self and ordered the necessary stimulants. That night I heard him moving restlessly in his bed, as though his conscience troubled him,—perhaps



THANKED HIM.

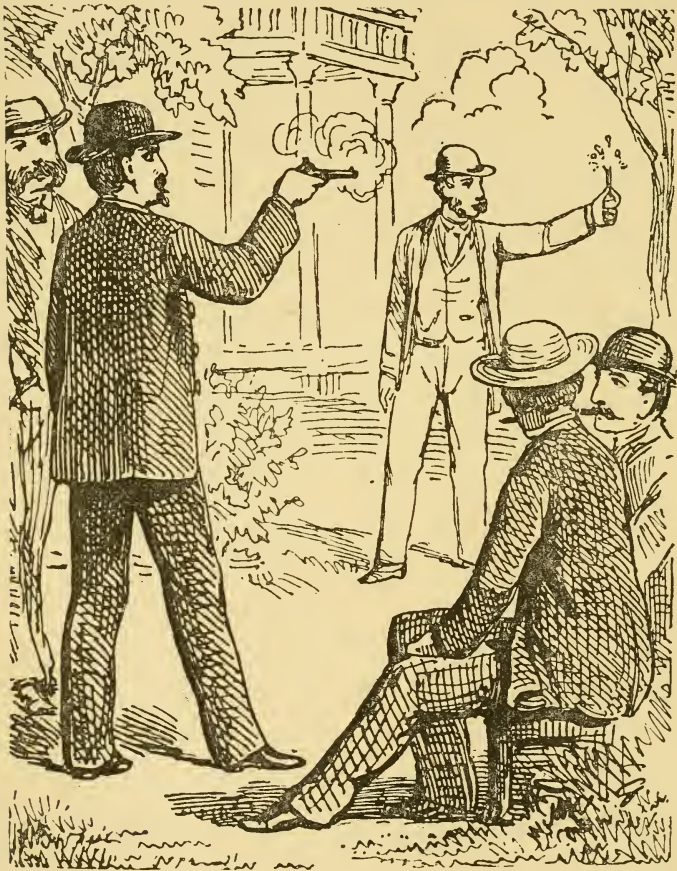
it did. The best of the thing was that the "cracker" on meeting him the next day thanked him warmly, with tears in his eyes, for his kindness. There were a number of the gentlemen present, and Jack did not seem to enjoy it; we did!

A few days afterwards, I had the pleasure of

witnessing an example of coolness and quick wit, such as it has rarely been my lot to see.

A party of gentlemen were practising pistol shooting, and among them was a celebrated marksman, who had been doing some exceedingly brilliant shooting. While the practice was going on, a young Englishman had been lazily reclining under a tree, smoking a cigar. After the gentleman, whom we will call Z, had made a more than usually fine shot, the Englishman said in a drawling tone, "By Jove, not so bad." No impertinence was intended, and the drawling tone was perfectly natural; but Z took offence at the remark, and said sarcastically, "I am glad you do not think it bad. Will you be kind enough to show us a good shot?" (handing him the pistol.) "I will hold out my cigar if you will oblige me by shooting the ashes off of it." The Englishman was placed in a position where he had either to attempt a shot which he knew he could not make, or admit that he was incapable of doing it. We all thought him caught; but no, he gravely returned the pistol and said,

in a slow, drawing manner, "My dear sir, I am



a stranger here, and this is your country, you

know. I will hold the cigar and you make the shot"; and with this he took the cigar between his fingers, and held it up in a careless, unconcerned way. Z accepted the pistol, stepped back a few rods and took aim; there was a flash, a report, and the ashes flew into the air in a little white cloud. The Englishman glanced at his cigar, smiled, bowed, and replacing it between his lips, walked slowly to the hotel.

CHAPTER XI.

THE STRANGER'S STORY.

THAT evening, while Jack and I were conversing with a tall, fine-looking man, who had arrived by the boat that afternoon, an old negro came up to us and requested a contribution in aid of a church about to be established some ten miles back in the country. Jack asked who was to be the minister.

“I is!”

“Do you feel competent to fill the position?”

“Wall, master, I is going to try and dispense de gospel, and wid de help ob de Lord I is goin' to succeed.”

We gave him some money, and as he moved away I observed a smile on the face of our new friend; and turning to me he said, “That last remark has recalled to my mind an incident which occurred many years ago while I was

travelling in California. If you would like to



hear the story, I should be most happy to relate

it." We signified our desire to do so; whereupon he lighted a fresh cigar, leaned back in his chair, and began at once.

THE STRANGER'S STORY.

I was a miner at that time, and while out prospecting among the mountains, we encamped one evening at a little mining village known by the name of Salt Gulch. Upon our arrival we were informed that the whole camp was in mourning on account of the death of "the parson," who had died that same afternoon. He had been a poor, weak, perhaps incapable young man, who had suddenly appeared in the camp some two years before. The rough men who constituted the population of the "Gulch" had liked him from the first, and had evidently felt a pride in having a minister in the camp. They had fed him and sheltered him, and he in return preached on Sunday to those who would come to the little log-cabin which constituted the church of the camp. He often watched by the bedside of the sick, tending them with kindness and gentleness,

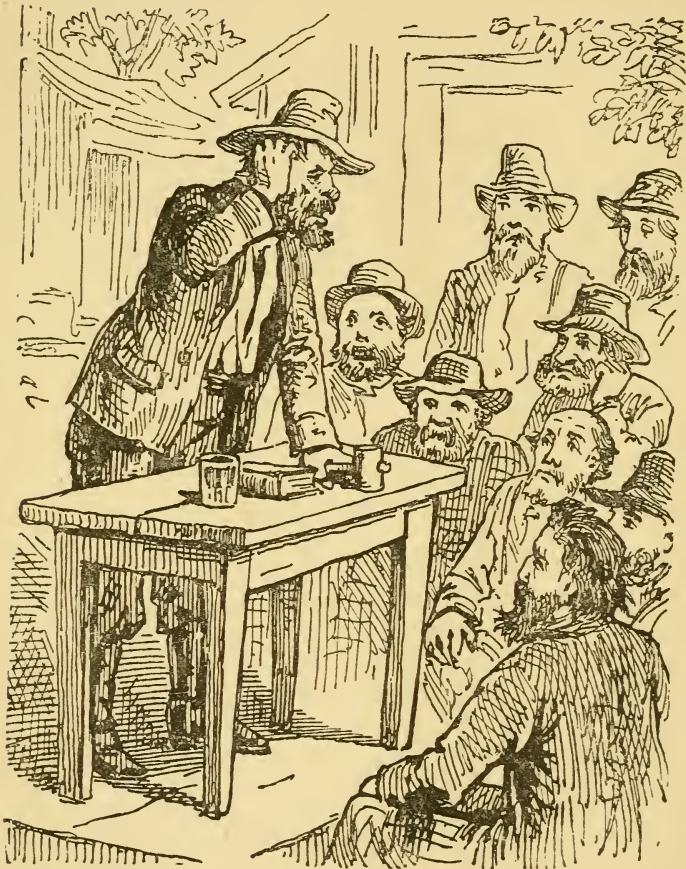
and the rough miners loved him; and when he died followed him to his grave, showing real sorrow, as they erected a rough pine cross to mark his last resting-place.

That night it was decided that in respect to the memory of the departed, the church should be kept up, and an individual known as "Brandy Joe" was unanimously elected to fill the vacant position of "parson."

The next day was Sunday, and after breakfast, the whole camp assembled in the church, in anxious expectation to see how "Joe" would get on in his new position. The pulpit consisted of a rough pine table, placed upon a small platform raised some three or four feet from the ground. On the table rested a Bible, a glass of water, and a mallet such as are used by auctioneers. As soon as the congregation had become quiet, Joe arose, rapped several times, to command silence, cleared his throat, and resting his hands upon the table in front of him, said, —

"My hearers! You all know that this is a new game to me. I have looked on several times

while it was a-goin' on, but I never took a hand



in it before. Yer see it was kinder rough on

this camp, when the dear departed passed in his checks. Seein' as how there wa'n't another of his profesh hangin' around in these parts, some one had to be run in to fill the vacancy: I was the galoot run in, and all I can say is, I am a-goin' to try and play the game straight clear through; and I don't believe as this camp will try and put up a job on me the first deal. Bein' as how I never expected to be called on to take the bank, and not bein' up in the game, I kinder looked into it last night; and I struck several p'intes which may interest the crowd. I struck one yarn about a chap named Balaam. It seems he was goin' on a visit to some of his friends, and was a-joggin' along, ridin' an old ass, and sorter takin' it easy, when the angel of the Lord rose up and stood in his way. The ass saw the angel standin' in the road and bolted; but Balaam belted him over the head with a club and drove him back into the road. And it came to pass that the angel moved on down the road and laid for 'em again; and when the ass come up and saw him, he jammed Balaam up against a wall;

and Balaam lifted up his voice and swore, and



lammed considerable dust out of the animal's

hide with the bludgeon. Again the procession moved on; this time the angel put up a job on 'em, and settled down in a part of the road which was so narrer they could n't git by. When the ass saw him the third time, and found he had no show, he threw up the game and sat down, slidin' Balaam off in the mud. Balaam was awful mad, because, you see, he was all fixed, — ragged out, as it were; he just riz outer that mud and whaled the ass like thunder. Then the Lord opened the beast's mouth, and she said unto Balaam, —

“‘Why dost thou whale me?’”

“And Balaam lifted up his voice and said, —

“‘By the beard of my daddy, I'll whale the immortal stuffin' out of yer, if you cut up any more shines with me!’”

Here the speaker paused for an instant, and then said, “I don't quite feel solid as to what was did after that; but he did n't have no more trouble, and got to where he was goin' all serene.”

Further speech was interrupted by a burst of applause; and cries of “Go it, Brandy!” “Bully for Joe!” were heard upon all sides.

When quiet was at length restored, Joe mopped his face mechanically with a large red handkerchief and continued:—

“I want to tell yer another story about a chap named Nebuchadnezzar, who was high-cock-a-lorum and chief boss of the locality in which he resided. Yer see, he had told the boys that they must knuckle under and look pious at an image, or something of that sort; and three of the boys, named Shadrach, Meshac, and Abednego, would n't do it. Their friends gave 'em dead away, and Neb. ordered 'em to be brought before him. The boys tumbled that they were in for it when they heard he wanted 'em; but they were game, and went. When Nebuchadnezzar saw 'em he said, 'I've been told that you three chaps won't pray to that lovely little god I've set up out there in the square. Now let me tell you chaps right here, that I rule this roost; and if, when next you hear the sweet sounds of the sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and jewsharp, you don't get down and worship that iffigy, I'll roast yer.' What did the boys do?

Did they weaken, and say they would tumble to the racket in future? Not much they did n't. They called a meeting right there, and appointed Shad. a committee of one to express their opinions ; and Shad said, 'O sire, you take us for the wrong kind of a set of angels. If you think we are going to worship that scarecrow to the sound of slow music, we beg to tender our resignation.'

"Then the king was as mad as if he had sat down on a nail, and he ordered his best oven to be heated seven times hotter than it ever had been before, and that Shad., Mesh., and Ab. should be chucked into it. Yer see, the boys were game, but the old man was too much for 'em, for he had the crowd with him; and they tied 'em and hove 'em into the oven. Then the old man got up, and his eyes stuck out, even like unto those of a lobster, and the following jawing took place:—

"'Did I not chuck three infidels into that oven?'

"And they answered unto him, saying, 'O king, thou hast a level head!'

“The old man, though, he saw four men walk-



about in the oven; and knowing he had only invested in three, it kinder broke him all up, and

he called the boys out, — and the Good Book says 'they come out.'”

Joe paused, wiped his face with the handkerchief again, and then continued, “I will now pronounce the benediction; the meeting will then adjourn, and I invite all hands to take a drink.”

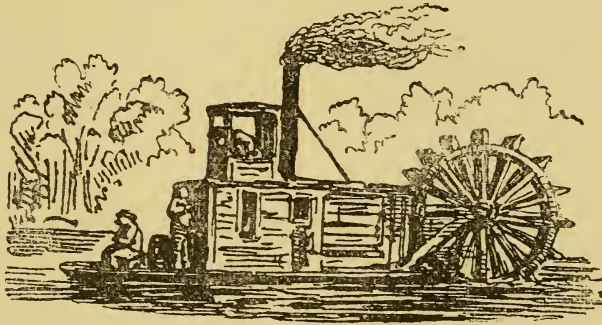
Bill Davis then arose and proposed three cheers for “Brandy Joe, the new parson.” They were given with a will; the benediction was then pronounced, and the meeting adjourned.

CHAPTER XII.

THE WILDERNESS.

WE soon tired of *Enterprise*, and yearned to ascend the river still farther and explore a country but little visited by tourists. Both of us were anxious to go; and when two people are anxious to do a thing, and nothing interferes, they generally do it. We consulted "Bunk," and found that he knew the country well enough to act as our guide. By the next morning we were ready and waiting for the little steamer "Wikiva," which was expected to arrive some time during the day. It is hard to describe the "Wikiva." A raft with a smoke-stack, a cabin, and an old mill-wheel hitched at one end, would resemble her, and go about as fast. She has to be flat-bottomed, as the river in some places is very shallow above Lake Harney; and as the pilots trust in Providence in their steering, a slow boat is a positive luxury.

At noon she had not come in sight, so we rowed up-river to get a little shooting until she overtook us. "Bunk" was fresh, and rowed hard until I cautioned him that if he did not go slower the boat would never overtake us. We



then went ashore and camped. About midnight she came in sight around a point a few hundred yards down the river. We then commenced getting our things together, to be ready to board her when she came past. The puffing and splashing grew louder and louder, and a little after one o'clock she was about opposite our camping-ground, and the following conversation ensued:—

"Boat ahoy!"

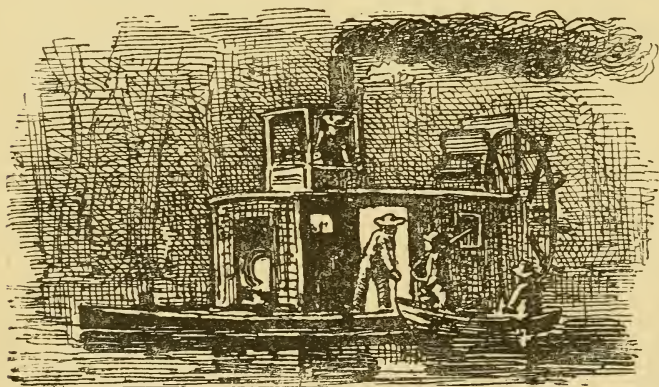
"Hullo!"

"We want to come aboard."

"All right, come ahead; there ain't any place there where we can run ashore and get yer."

"All right, hold on, and we'll come out to you."

A few strong strokes of the oars, and we were alongside; a rope was thrown to us, and "Bunk" made the boat fast while we clambered over the side.



THE "WIKIVA."

Upon inquiring for a state-room, we were informed the boat only contained two, and they were both taken; so nothing was left for us to do but to sleep in the engine-room. The room

was small and close; and as the furnace door was open about all the time, the atmosphere was somewhat heated. I should judge that I had slept for about half an hour, when I was awakened by a sensation as if gradually being roasted alive. I called "Bunk" and sent him for my thermometer. It was one of the common kind, and did not register over 220 degrees. It burst in eleven seconds.

During a conversation with the engineer, I learned that he had acted as engineer on that boat for four years; and although he had led a wild and somewhat wicked life, he did not fear death. I believed him.

I went outside to get some air, and find a place to lie down in which I might possibly get some sleep. Hardly had I got outside the door, before I stumbled over a bundle of blankets lying in a heap, which some negligent person had left lying on the deck. Now, I am sweet-tempered, but anything like that annoys me; so I turned around and relieved my feelings by kicking it as hard as I could. Then the bundle rose up and was going to kick me, but I apologized.

I felt better then. Nothing makes a man feel so contented as to think over an event of that kind. Imagine the feelings of a person



I APOLOGIZE.

who is kicked out of a sound sleep by a stranger, and then to have the stranger apologize in a most humble manner, so that he can't do anything except swear! The more the injured party

thinks it over, the madder he gets; while the offender, as he muses on the event, experiences a sense of tranquillity stealing over his senses, and feels at peace with all the world.

I found Jack asleep on the other side of the boat, and woke him up to tell him about my mistake; but he was ungrateful, and wanted to know why I could n't have kept it until morning. Jack is peculiar sometimes.

In about an hour I was awakened by the sound of escaping steam, and learned that the pilot was sleepy, and they had run the boat ashore while he took a nap. Towards morning we started again, and arrived at Lake Harney about daylight. Here we left the steamboat, and rowed ashore to make a camp and get some breakfast. While "Bunk" was at work preparing our morning repast, Jack and I took our guns and started off to see what we could find

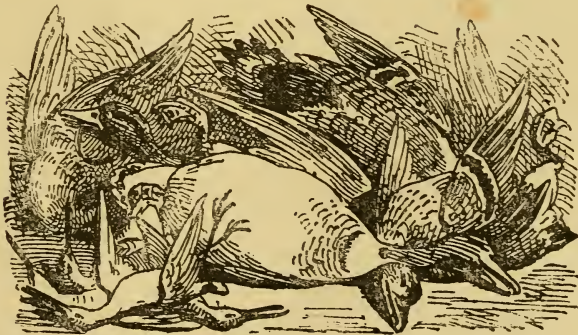


in the shape of game, and in a short time procured a number of snipe, which we found quite



abundant in the vicinity of the lake. Upon our return to camp we found breakfast all ready and waiting for us. It was a simple repast, consist-

ing of pancakes, hard-tack, and coffee; but what it lacked in variety, it made up for in quantity. I tried the pancakes, but did not like them; they were too rich. Jack did not seem to appreciate them any better than I did, so we made our breakfast of hard-tack. Breakfast over, we stowed the luggage in the boat; and after getting in ourselves, there was not much spare room left. We found that the boat was loaded too heavily at the stern to row easily; but Jack soon rectified that difficulty by throwing over the pancakes, which "Bunk" had carefully packed away for future use as ballast.



CHAPTER XIII.

DEEP CREEK.

THERE is a dreamy sense of enjoyment in floating along with the river in a wild, uninhabited region. The morning dawns slowly, and the smooth water presents a beautiful appearance, seemingly covered by a mass of white clouds, which slowly disappear as the sun rises higher and higher in the heavens. All nature is fresh and sweet after its baptism of dew, and a few remaining drops still sparkle on the leaves as they sway and rustle in the morning breeze. The oars are at rest in the boat, and not a sound disturbs the silence except the occasional song of some wood bird, singing merrily as it sways upon the topmost bough of an overhanging tree, or chirping softly to its mate concealed in the thick undergrowth. The long Spanish moss hangs in graceful festoons from the trees, and adds a

strange beauty to the scenery, which at this part of the river is often picturesque and grand. Floating along in this manner, stopping now and then to knock over a few snipe, or to get a shot at the ducks, which abound in the small lagoons, we at last reached the mouth of Deep Creek and made our camp in its vicinity, as we intended to explore it the next day. Our bag for the day had been very good, considering that we had not spent a great deal of time in shooting. It included sixteen ducks, two or three teal, and a couple of dozen snipe, besides a lot of small birds, which Jack classified scientifically, and nearly gave "Bunk" the lockjaw when he tried to name them after him.

The mosquitoes enjoyed us that night, and went and gave their friends our address, so that before morning a large congregation had assembled; and it was only by using quantities of oil of tar that they were kept at a respectful distance. We passed a most uncomfortable night, and by the time it was fairly light the next morning, we were in our boat and paddling

slowly up the creek. About half a mile from its mouth it gradually narrows until the overhanging trees meet at the top, so that we were entirely protected from the rays of the sun.



AN UNCOMFORTABLE NIGHT.

Upon rounding a bend, the sound of a heavy splash ahead of us would reveal the presence of some large alligator, which had been lying asleep on the bank, but whose acute senses had detected our presence before we had reached a point where he could be seen. Quantities of little alligators were to be seen along the banks, and stared

stupidly at us as we passed, but the larger ones were very shy and difficult to obtain a shot at.

While lazily enjoying the constantly changing scene, Jack suddenly raised his hand, and pointed at the same time, making a gesture to signify that we were to keep quiet. Following the direction of his gaze, I saw two huge wood ibises standing upon a dead branch about forty yards distant. They had evidently seen us, and were just in the act of leaving their perch when the report of our guns awoke the echoes of the forest, and they both came to the ground. Little did we dream of the amount of life which was lying concealed in that apparently deserted spot. At the sound of our guns, two large flocks of white ibises started hurriedly from their concealment, and circled shrieking over our heads; from the woods upon our left came the harsh cries of paroquets; and a heavy crashing in the bushes just ahead of us told of the presence of some large animal whose meditations we had suddenly disturbed. For the next few minutes, things were lively in that creek; but

then a sudden silence fell on the scene, and had



DEEP CREEK.

it not been for the dead bodies of the birds float-



I 'VE GOT HIM.

ing in the water, we might have thought the

whole thing to have been a dream. One huge wood ibis was making off among the bushes, and Jack jumped ashore and started to catch him. They both disappeared among the bushes, but I heard them splashing about in the water of a small marsh, which was concealed from our view by the undergrowth. A few more splashes, and then a cheery voice shouted, "All right; I've got him!" Another splash or two, and then, "No, d—n it; he's got me!"

The sounds of a struggle were borne faintly to my ears, accompanied by exclamations of a character which showed that somebody was excited; and a moment after, that somebody appeared upon the scene, in the shape of Jack, holding the poor ibis in one hand and an enormous club in the other.

The next night we camped near Thorn Hill Creek, where we found a grove of sweet-lemon trees, the fruit of which makes a very pleasant drink. At this point there is a small shanty, in which we had intended to stop for the night; but upon our arrival we found it already occupied by

a negro and a white man. The latter was lying upon a bed of blankets in a high fever. He was delirious most of the time, and during the night we were entertained by bursts of wild laughter and snatches of old songs. We passed a most



uncomfortable night, but a little episode occurred towards morning which cheered us up somewhat. "Bunk" got bitten by a scorpion.

In the morning we held a consultation, and decided that we had had enough shooting for the present. Game was plenty, but we had no

use for it, and it would be wicked to destroy life merely for the sake of destroying life. Neither wished to go back to Enterprise, but we both agreed that we had better go in that direction. In the evening we arrived at the hotel.



A few days later we were again on the river, this time going north. The trip down does not differ materially from the trip up, except that the steamer goes a little faster on account of the current; and by keeping a tree on shore in line with some object on the boat, a passenger may easily tell which way he is going.

We stopped at Palatka over night, and astonished our systems with a good, substantial meal. There was a weighing machine in the office, and Jack and I both weighed ourselves. Jack ate heartily that night, and his appetite seemed to have improved the next morning. Just before leaving I asked him to weigh himself over again. He did so: he had gained nine pounds.

CHAPTER XIV.

ST. AUGUSTINE.



A SHORT sail brought us to Tocoï, where we found a train in waiting to convey us to St.

Augustine. During the ride Jack read from his book, and howled information to me across the car about the places which were worth seeing in St. Augustine. The road was rough in some places, and it was necessary for him to raise his voice to enable me to hear him. He was in the middle of a flowery description when we crossed a bridge; the noise was deafening, but Jack never missed a word, and was yelling like a maniac, when the train suddenly ran on to a smoother part of the road. An old gentleman seated near the door arose, looked around hastily, and then went into a forward car.

Nothing unusual occurred during the ride, and we arrived at St. Augustine when the train did. We had been advised to go to the St. Augustine Hotel, so we went there. There are many things about a St. Augustine hotel which might be improved; but then the place is old, very old. Jack always spoke of it afterwards as a "d—d old town."

The hotel contained a billiard-room and several first-class tables. Jack and I tried a game;

but being somewhat tired with travelling, we could not drive the balls hard enough against the cushions to make them rebound, so we gave it up and went to bed.



We visited the cathedral: it is worth seeing, — everybody says it is. It has an overwhelming interest to the traveller, for some reason which I have forgotten; but I am glad I saw it, for now when I hear any one talking about the beauty of the St. Augustine Cathedral, I pity him in silence. Speaking of cathedrals brings to mind

an incident which occurred in Paris some years ago. We had been repeatedly advised to go to the Magdalene and hear the morning service. A party of four of us decided to go; but we started late, and when we entered the church the services had already commenced. I was struck by the solemn silence of the place; but my meditations were interrupted by an old chap seated near the door, who stuck out a badly worn paint-brush as we passed. He had on a little black velvet cap to keep him from catching cold. We avoided him and sat down. I observed that several other people who came in after us were treated in the same way, but they were all sold by the old duffer, for they stuck their fingers in the brush, and then put them to their noses; but they did not seem to like the perfume, for they all wiped them afterwards in a careless manner upon their clothes, with a sort of a criss-cross motion. G—— asked a grave-looking man next to him if it was perfume, and was told that it was “a perfume for the soul.” G—— looked at him severely, and then relapsed into silence; but he

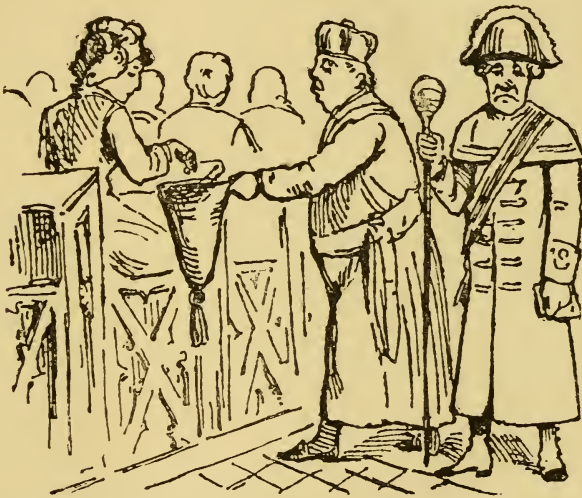
told me in confidence afterwards, that if he had not wished to avoid disturbing the congregation, he would have "reached for that party and mopped the floor with him."



We watched the proceedings for some time, and tried to look pious and sanctified; but it was not very entertaining, — there was a sameness about it which became tiresome after a time.

Between the acts a tall man in a gorgeous uniform, carrying in his hand a large cane with

a silver ball for a head, passed in and out among the people, followed by a short, fat party, who carried a sort of fancy cap in his hand. I noticed that the people put money into the cap when it was held out to them. There was a



musty smell about the place, which we were told was caused by burning incense. I had heard of incense, and was glad that I had smelt it, for otherwise I might have bought some some time, and then I should have been sold. We sat quietly for about half an hour, and I was just

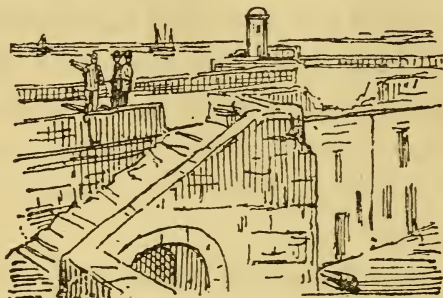
beginning to feel the beautiful solemnity of the place stealing over my senses, making me feel sleepy, when G—— broke the illusion by asking, "Have n't you had about enough of this?" We filed out, again avoiding the paint-brush. The boys were very quiet, and seemed to be thinking of something; perhaps meditating on their past sins and resolving to do better. I hoped it was so, but had grave doubts, and did not like to venture any remarks on the subject.

The day we visited the St. Augustine Cathedral there was no service in progress, but I sat down on one of the benches and imagined I was again enjoying the grand services of the old cathedrals; the illusion was perfect when I fell asleep.

We visited Fort Marion, — every one goes there. Jack read me a description of it on the way, from a gaudy pamphlet which he had that morning added to his collection. It ran as follows: —

"The old fort here is the chief glory of St. Augustine. For three centuries the coquina

walls of Fort Marion — the modern name of 'San Marco' — have looked down upon the bay and the distant open sea, the town and its fading generations. Now the late tenants — the In-



Indian prisoners — are gone, it seems more dreary and sad than ever. Passing the portcullis, we enter the great court-yard, surrounded by casements, in one or two of which are stacks of old cannon; to the right is a sloping way leading

to the broad pathway above, where we look down into the moat and water battery with its heavy guns.



“At the corners are queer little martello towers, — sentry boxes with loop-holes, — and at the far end a larger

tower surmounted by a ladder. Below stairs they show one the dungeon, with its ghostly legends of imprisoned unfortunates left to die."

We saw the fort, and took a look at the dungeons; but we restrained our enthusiasm, and were calm and self-possessed during our conversation with the dirty soldier who showed us about.

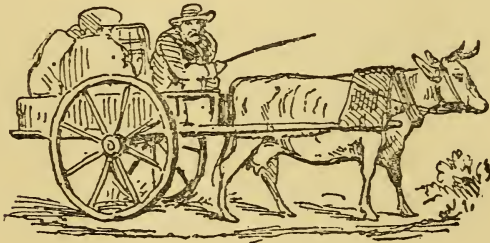
One of the most interesting places which we visited was the lighthouse on Anastasia Island, which is in plain view from the hotel. The lighthouse



is painted in alternate black and white stripes, resembling a barber's pole, from a distance. The keeper is a determined fellow; and the beach is lined with the bones of men who have gone over there to get shaved.

We had been in St. Augustine about a week when Jack began to get restless. He wanted to

go to Nassau. He had found out that a steamer was to leave for New Providence the following week, and he had made up his mind to go; what was more, he wanted me to go with him. When we sat down to breakfast he talked of Nassau; during our morning walks he talked of Nassau; at dinner, he dwelt upon the tropical climate, and the splendid fruits to be found there. In the evening he produced his book, and filled the air



A NATIVE.

with ravings about Nassau. At last he read a paragraph that settled it. It was the following:—

“If there is any such thing as an earthly sensuous paradise, I should think it might be found under a banyan-tree in the delicious mid-

winter climate of Nassau. This leafy paradise should be enjoyed in a hammock swung from the banyan's branches. You can get a very good manila hammock for fifty cents. A delicious cigar, such as is found here, will help to intensify the tropical felicity. If that don't do it, the *Cannabis Indica* grows within sight, from which is derived the famous hasheesh, which is the king of all narcotics in weaving a dreamy spell about its votaries."

Now, I wanted to see a place where I could stand under a banyan-tree and look at a "*Cannabis Indica*," and I wanted some "hasheesh." I did not know what "hasheesh" was, but I wanted some anyway; so when the hour arrived to go on board the "Secret," Jack and I were among the passengers.

For some time after getting under way the vessel followed the coast; but in the evening she turned about and steered boldly eastward. It was a lovely moonlight night, and Jack and I were on deck watching the slowly retreating land. Gradually it faded from our view until we

rolled upon an unbroken sea of white-capped waves lit up by myriads of animalculæ, seeming on fire as they dashed against the side of the vessel.



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